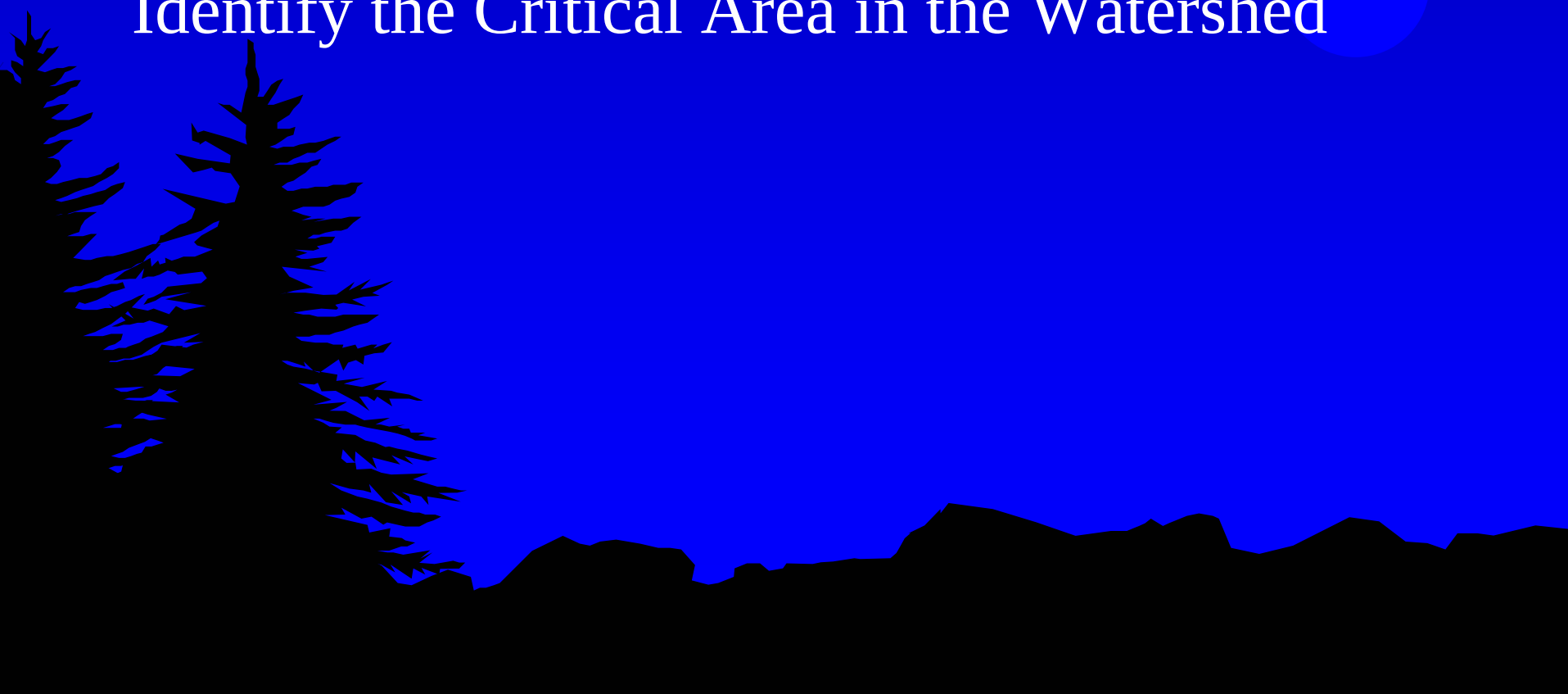
Chapter 3

Defining the Critical Area in Your Watershed Plan

Objective

Identify the Critical Area in the Watershed



What is A Critical Area?

The geographic portion of the watershed that contributes a majority of the pollutants and is having a significant impact on the water body.

What Are the Purposes for Defining the Critical Area?

1) Identifies the geographic area that will be inventoried in detail

2) Determines the geographic area that will have water quality improvement practices installed.

How Is the Boundary of the Critical Area Determined?

Start along the water body's edge.
Be Flexible at first.
Study the topography, soil types, land uses and management, drainage patterns, and distance from the source to the water body.

How is the Boundary of the Critical Area Determined? Cont...

Consider how the pollutants might be reaching the water:

Identify the pollutant sources

Determine where they originate

Assess their movement from the source to the water

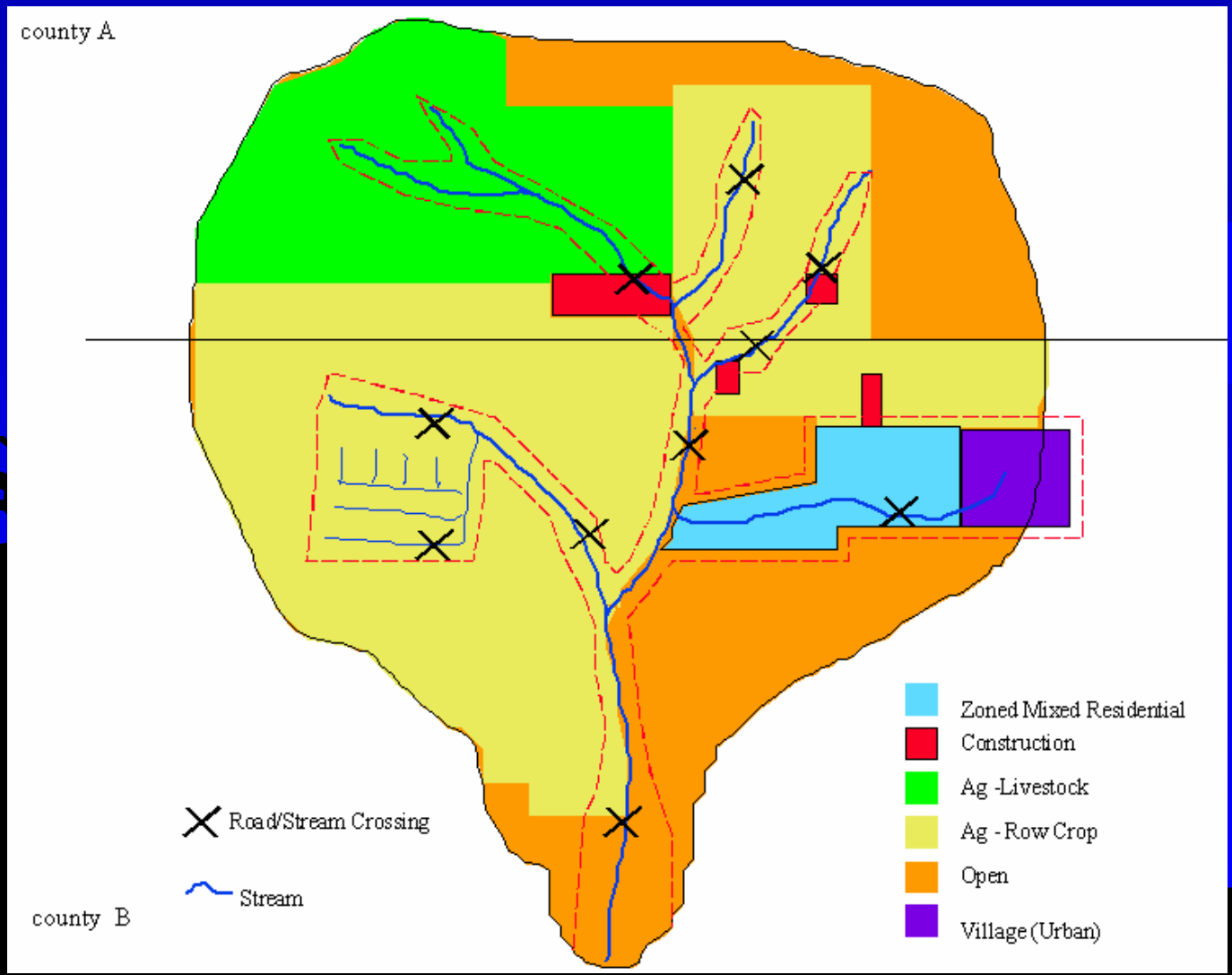
Determining how the pollutant gets to the water body will define the Critical Area

In general,

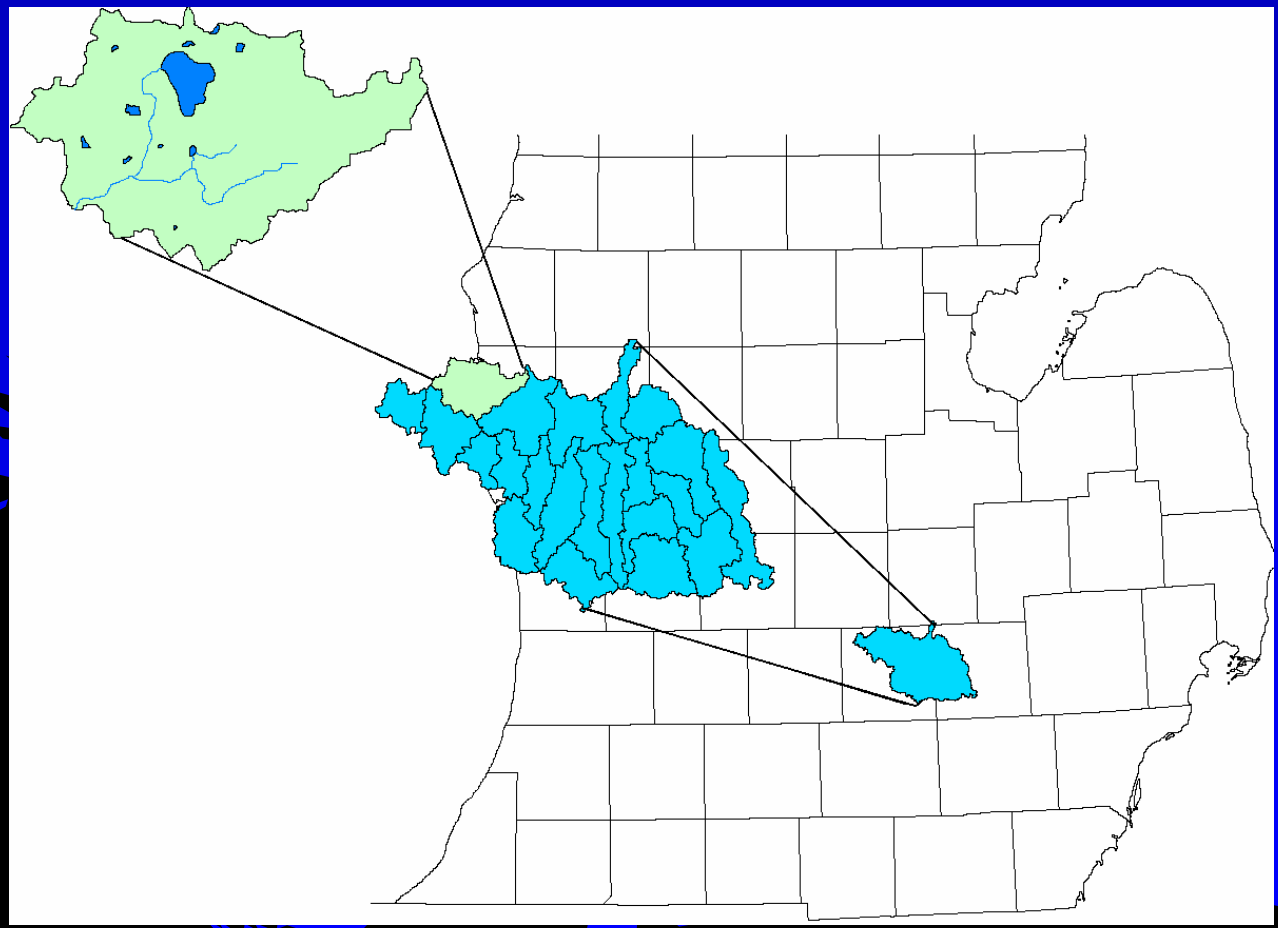
There are several ways to identify the Critical Area:

1) Corridor
2) Sub Watershed
3) Entire Watershed
4) Combination of two or more of the above

Corridor Method



Sub Watershed Method



Entire Watershed

Gallagher Creek….

- Small watershed
- Rolling topography
- Several drains and streams
- Urban development pressures
- Entire watershed contributing sediment

Combination Method

Chapter Product

A delineated Critical Area based on data analysis such as:

- Designated Uses
- Pollutants
- Sources of Pollution
- Pathway of the Pollutants including Distance to the Water Body
- Topography
- Soils
- Land use and Management

Identify the Critical Area that geographically narrows the scope of the watershed project by focusing attention on the part of the watershed that contributes pollution to the water. This will help you meet the CMI requirement for identifying the sources of pollutants that are critical to control.